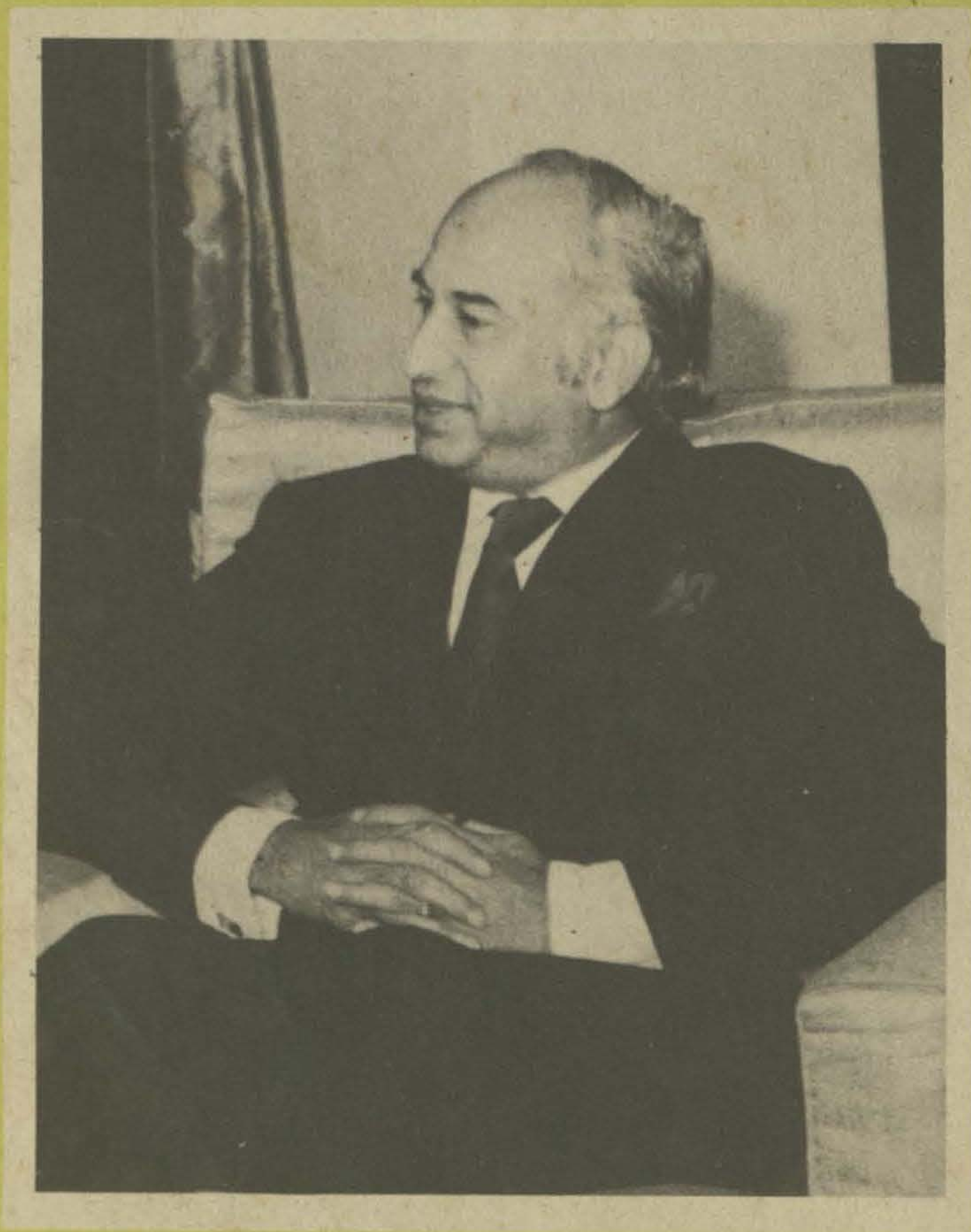


Prime Minister

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO

Interview to Asia Observer, London

LARKANA December 24, 1975

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This interview was granted by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Managing Editor of "Asia Observer", London, at Larkana on December 24, 1975.

Question: *Sir, are you satisfied with the progress made in Pakistan during the last four years of your Party's rule?*

Prime Minister : Being satisfied or not is a relative condition, more so in a given period of time. A Government truly committed to the continuing betterment of the people who have voted it into office should never be satisfied, no matter how much progress it has achieved. Satisfaction can also mean complacency and it is not good to be complacent. In this sense we do not wish to say that we are satisfied, because we are a poor country and we still have many problems. We are an underdeveloped country and the world is going through a serious economic crisis. You know the world situation, you live in England and you can appreciate better the great problems that governments are facing everywhere — in Europe, in Africa, in Latin America, in North America and in Australia. These problems are much more acute for underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, especially for countries like ours, which have gone through many wars — three to be exact since our independence ; a country which has still to settle its major disputes with neighbouring countries.

There are so many other legacies from the past, legacies in the form of unresolved problems that became more complicated with the passage of time. Of course, we have resolved many outstanding problems; we have successfully tackled many problems which were left hanging in the air by our past Governments. We have solved very many basic problems of Pakistan, we have moved ahead and our economy is in fairly good shape but much more needs to be done to raise the per capita income, to raise the living standard of the common man. Our resources are limited but we have introduced many fundamental reforms which should have a far-reaching effect on the people of Pakistan. We have given the country a Constitution and settled the vexatious problems of provincial autonomy. These are not simple achievements. The world has acknowledged them and a very large majority of our people also have appreciated them. And the Government is grateful to the people for their co-operation and contribution without which success would not have been possible.

Problems and performance

But I would be unrealistic if I did not mention factors which have diluted our success in some sectors. The acute economic crisis in the world, the international inflation and consequent recession have affected Pakistan's economy also. The cost of living has gone up, absorbing most of the wage and income increases which flow from many of our reforms. Because of this, the effects of some of our reforms are not as apparent as they should have been. But, in this international situation, what would have been the plight of the people without these reforms? On balance we have done well; considering our problems and our performance. In the last four years we have faced the consequences of our country's dismemberment, and dealt with police strikes, labour unrest and language problems, and tackled the issue of our relations with and recognition of Bangladesh. We formulated a new foreign policy for a new Pakistan. This reoriented foreign policy has led to the consolidation of our friendship with Muslim countries, especially with Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Because of all this I would say I am satisfied with what Pakistan, under the People's Party Government, has achieved. Most observers, including those in U.K., consider our successes impressive and our progress laudable. But as I have said before I am not satiated with success. My vision is of a more prosperous Pakistan and until that goal is attained we shall continue to work hard, to work and work because there is no substitute for work. This message I have given to our people repeatedly.

Another factor which adversely affects the balance I

spoke about is our rate of consumption. This offsets most of what we produce. A nation that does not discipline its consumption cannot enjoy the advantages of a net surplus in production. The success story of many countries lies in how they curtailed their consumption when this was necessary. The Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution drastically disciplined the consumption of many commodities and consumer goods, especially essential goods, and the same was done in the People's Republic of China. This policy is being followed also in Vietnam and Cambodia, which have seen thirty years of war and destruction. Our people too should set their priorities in consumption in the higher national interest. It is clear that some form of restriction on consumption is necessary. Every year the consumption figures are going up. I have been giving our people the example of tea. We are spending eighty million dollars on the import of tea. And that is more than the development budget of one of our four provinces. That should give your readers some idea of what I am talking about. I have been releasing these figures of tea consumption and its cost to spread awareness of the problem among the people who will surely respond by imposing restrictions on themselves so as to allow Pakistan to curtail its expenditure on tea imports. But they may have to be guided as to how much curtailment is necessary, and for this we may have to introduce some measures.

More production

At the same time, we will have to produce much more in all sectors of our economy. We shall set higher targets. But remember that this balance between estimated consumption and planned production was upset by floods and drought and the damage to the Tarbela Dam and some other connected factors. But now investment is improving in the public sector. I hope it will improve also in the private sector. This and the hard work by our people I have been talking about should result in greater production and more rapid progress in our programme for the socio-economic betterment of the people.

Success in coming elections

Question: *Sir, in the last general elections, your Party was elected with a great majority. Do you expect the same majority in the next general elections?*

Prime Minister : It is difficult to say at this time. It will depend on the situation when the elections come. However, if a fair assessment is made of the achievements of the People's Government, and I am confident of the people's ability, common sense and fair-mindedness to do so, and after they have examined the alter-

natives, I have no doubt that they will make the right choice, I have great faith in the people of Pakistan. The people of Pakistan have been very kind to me, they have been very generous to me. I also have not failed them. There might be pockets of opposition, and there might be resentment over some of the problems which are unavoidable due to the situation I have described, but at the same time, I know that the people of Pakistan have confidence in my Government and in my Party. I have every reason to be optimistic about the future.

Democratic institutions needed

Question: *Sir, some people think that the Presidential system is more suitable for Pakistan. How do you see it as the Prime Minister?*

Prime Minister : The Presidential system we had was not really a Presidential system in the true sense, because it was built on, what President Ayub Khan called, Basic Democracies and that did not give the people the right to choose their President by direct vote in a general election. On the other hand the Parliamentary system is a system with which we have been familiar for a very long time, and you know that the demand for a Parliamentary system in Pakistan was made unanimously by all parties. There was not a single party which went to the elections asking for another system, and now we are working the Parliamentary system after a break of fifteen years. That was a long break and it requires time to settle down in a system with which people have lost touch or which is totally new to them, as is the case for many of our legislators. It should be given an opportunity to mature. Only then can we say how it works. To pass a judgement at this stage would be premature. And that both the Presidential and the Parliamentary forms of government depend on the willing co-operation and understanding of the people. What is basic — and this can be common to both systems — is that the people should have democracy, a democratic structure and institutions which would repel chaos and any intrigues, internal or foreign, against our national integrity.

Sovereignty of Pakistan must be defended

When I talk about these intrigues, I am not dramatising the situation. Only four years ago our country was dismembered and that dismemberment was due to internal and external conspiracies. These conspiracies and those involved in them are still active. Against this background our vigilance has to continue unabated and we shall not allow it to be eroded by accepting a concept of political permissiveness

which would allow anti-state elements to work for the disintegration of Pakistan. Our foremost duty is to defend the sovereignty and the frontiers of the country. Only if there is a country we can discuss whether it should have a Presidential or a Parliamentary system. If a country does not exist the question of what political system it should have does not arise. I have said this only to indicate what priorities should be in an academic discussion or in an actual situation in which all these factors come into play. As I have said to you earlier we are working the Parliamentary system. We are not in any great difficulty. Like any other system, the Parliamentary form also has its drawbacks and its disadvantages, but with the process of elections, I think, matters will settle down over a period of time. I cannot, at this stage, say that this system will work for all time ; that would be saying too much, but if a system works for a generation, or properly even for a decade or so, then it should be said that it has worked.

General de Gaulle gave a system to France and that system is still there but the support for it now is less fervent than it was when General de Gaulle gave it to the French people. However, it has worked because it has been there for a decade or more. Human beings cannot create a rigid political structure for all times. I would again like to mention Britain. Its Parliamentary system is going through many stresses and strains. Although the British Parliament is called the Mother of Parliaments, yet there are people in Britain who believe that new forces, especially the economic forces and militant trade unionism, which were not there when the system was devised, are putting a strain on it now. Other factors also are causing observers to put it under scrutiny. To wrap up my answer I would like to add that it also must be appreciated and realised that the Parliamentary system in Britain, and in other parts of Europe, really succeeded on the basis of empires. Empires were able to stabilise their internal economies because from empires they got cheap raw materials, cheap primary commodities and cheap semi-manufactured goods and they built up their economies on that basis. Their political system worked successfully because their economies were supplemented by external resources. It was a kind of economic aid which was extracted by the imperial powers from all parts of their empires. Now, of course, you can say that Pakistan too gets economic aid. But we have to pay back what we get as aid on low or high rates of interest. If we did not have to repay this aid and instead got a non-repayable amount of two to three billion dollars every year then we would be able to work almost any system.

Provincialism

Question: *Sir, after dismemberment Pakistan was beset with Pakhtoonistan, then Jiay Sind, then trouble in Baluchistan and now in Punjab. To what can we attribute this ever-increasing trend towards provincialism or more?*

Prime Minister: Well, partly you would find an answer to it by a careful study of the history of what is called the subcontinent. I really don't like that word "subcontinent". However, that is a separate issue. Part of the answer to your question lies in this long history, beginning from Ashoka, and the Maurya and Gupta dynasties, and leading up to the Mughal period. When Aurangzeb came to power, the Mughal rule was declining, and later the British and the Portuguese and the French struggled for supremacy. Through this long period of many centuries the map of the subcontinent changed, from time to time, from period to period, from dynasty to dynasty. Sometimes I wonder what would have been the fate of this region if Aurangzeb, for whom I have very great respect, had come at the time of Akbar, and Akbar had come later. Akbar was a great conciliator but, at the same time, he was partly responsible, in my opinion, for allowing what later became forces of disintegration to raise their head. Aurangzeb, on the other hand, was an outstanding statesman. I think he saw very clearly the future of the world.

British policy of "divide and rule"

Of course, in India, they don't have much time for Aurangzeb, and they call his great grandfather Akbar the Great. I do not want to belittle Akbar's greatness but the story of the subcontinent would have been different if Aurangzeb had come in Akbar's time. Aurangzeb came when Marhatta power was rising and expanding ; it had challenged Mughal power and a kind of vacuum was developing. The British stepped into this vacuum and they pursued a policy of divide-and-rule. This no one can deny ; I am not indulging in a cliche. I am mentioning a historical fact. Finally, they sent as Viceroy to India, Lord Mountbatten.

Recently, a book written by a Frenchman and an Englishman, called "Freedom at Midnight", has been published. It is full of praise for Mountbatten and critical of Quaid-i-Azam, but in some of their criticism of Quaid-i-Azam's political role the authors have unwittingly paid a tribute to him. This criticism of him has, in fact, brought out what a great man the Quaid was for the Muslims of South Asia, for the Muslims of undivided India. In a day we will be celebrating the 99th birth

anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam who, to my mind, was the greatest of the Muslims that the subcontinent has produced, and among them I include Aurangzeb.

But the Quaid did not live long enough to give the country a constitution. Had the constitution been framed in his life time, some of these provincial problems would have been solved, but, unfortunately, that did not happen. Without a firm constitutional arrangement, approved by the people, clearly defining the rights and obligations of the Centre and the Provinces, differences among the provinces became deeper and suspicions became sharper. This is part of history. Some of the differences were basically constitutional and political in nature. With the passage of time they became more aggravated. Our unanimously adopted Constitution provides an accepted solution to the problem of provincial autonomy. But in a national compact of this nature the letter and spirit of the agreement are equally important. However, some vested interests have sought to keep alive some provincial issues to provide themselves with a political base without due regard to national cohesion or integrity. This has created some problems alright but ours is an alert and active Government and I am quite confident that we will overcome them. I look with confidence to the future of our four provinces in the federation of Pakistan.

Baluchistan

Of course, we have had to go through some difficult times in Baluchistan. There have been anxious moments and we are still not entirely satisfied with the implementation of our development programme there. In the Frontier also, there have been anxious moments but we have passed the most difficult phase, in my opinion, and we will continue to search for a viable solution to any problems that are genuine.

We should not exaggerate these problems too much. We should be concerned and we should tackle them and grapple with them but we should not over-exaggerate them. These problems exist in neighbouring India also, but they keep them under cover to some extent. Even in smaller countries, like Sri Lanka, such problems exist. Sri Lanka has been free for twenty-eight years but only the other day Mrs. Bandaranaike made a speech saying that her Government would not tolerate secessionism and would not allow a Tamil-land to be created in Sri Lanka, and she warned the Tamils in her country against links with some parts of India.

You have such problems also in Great Britain, where there is trouble in Northern Ireland and regional issues in

Wales and in Scotland. This problem exists also in Europe : take, for instance, the demands of some Basques in Spain and France. In the Lebanon, a most tragic civil strife is taking place. In Africa, the former Portuguese territory of Angola is a battleground for rival armed groups. Such problems exist in Malaysia, they exist in Indonesia, they exist in the Philippines, they exist in many parts of the world.

But we are concerned with Pakistan which has been a victim of dismemberment and is acutely conscious of what these problems can lead to. We have suffered in 1971 what some of the Balkanised states may have gone through in Eastern Europe earlier this century. We, therefore, must look at this question as a whole and in its correct perspective. We must not close our eyes to local grievances in any of our provinces but at the same time we must not think or act as if they are unique to Pakistan. We have made much progress, a great deal of progress, politically and psychologically, and I am full of confidence and hope about Pakistan's future ; about its integrity and about its socio-economic progress for the betterment of all its people, in their rising morale.

Situation in Sind and Punjab

You have also asked about "Jiay Sind". The Opposition tries to exaggerate the Sind problems and accuses the Government of not taking a firm position. Our stand on national integrity is unambiguous. But should we over-react and extend our action beyond the dimensions of the problem ? That would alienate people who may unnecessarily be affected by excessive action. This would not be correct ; it would be most deplorable. We are in full control of the situation and have taken strong action, wherever and whenever it has been needed. In some situations the action has to be stronger, in others the action has to be less stringent. In some situations the action has to be entirely political ; in others it has to be a combination of political and non-political action.

As far as Punjab is concerned, I do not think that anyone can incite trouble there on such matters. Punjab is the majority province and only petty politicians or adventurers and opportunists will try to take a narrow parochial road but they will find that it leads nowhere. They might think that the road is wide open but the moment they embark on a political journey on it they will find their paths blocked by the common sense of the people. The logic of the situation is such that it is not possible to try to incite this feeling in the majority province and the reasons are self-evident.

I do not want to go into statistics and details but I can assert with a clear conscience that my Government has been

fair to all the four provinces. As a Mussalman I swear by Almighty Allah that we have done justice to all the four provinces and that we have done this while taking into account the priorities of national unity and national integration. Even in determining the priorities I have been very sensitive and conscious of the needs of the majority province.

Fair share in taxes and duties

You know that now, for the first time, the shareable federal taxes and duties are distributed among the provinces according to the size of their population, with some subventions for the lesser developed provinces of the Frontier and Baluchistan, subventions which no one grudges. Our Annual Development Programme allocations are made on the same basis. In the past, these allocations were never made on the population basis, and there were considerations of parity. We have done away with that system and there is a great deal of development taking place and a great deal of effort going into it. I cannot forget that I was given an overwhelming mandate by the people of Punjab. I am attached to them very much but, at the same time, I have to look after the interests of the whole country and I would like emphatically to say that there must be a balanced, harmonious and equitable growth, and growth on this pattern is now taking place.

So, please do not think that we in Pakistan have a mighty crisis on our hands and that everyone is a separatist, that everyone wants to go his own way. After the long years of Martial Law many people did grope for issues they could use to build up their leaderships. Some of them chose provincial issues and they have now had their say. The people have given them a hearing, but have turned their backs on them to face national issues.

Majority interested in national issues

The constructive forces are in a vast majority. Their sheer number has almost submerged those with narrow platforms of provincial issues. The situation here is settling down. But remember we are a dynamic people and some dissent may exist in some small pocket or the other. What democracy is without it? Distance may distort the size of such dissent, magnify it. When you live in a foreign country, you are naturally concerned about your homeland, especially a homeland with a recent history such as ours. The Opposition people go there, they tell yarns, they tell fibs and false stories, but I have got a great deal of confidence in our people living abroad; they must have heard about or seen for themselves the progress made by Pakistan. They can also rest assured

that Pakistan today is stronger, more powerful and more united than it was at the beginning of the decade.

There was a time, when efforts were being made for a unified state of Germany. Three wars were fought to make a German nation. A war against Denmark, another against Austria and the third and final war which united Germany was fought under Bismarck. There was a saying in those days which went something like this : "If you are a German you **must** become my brother or I will crush your head to make you my brother." So sometimes you have to bang heads together to make brothers of people, to create a brotherhood. Don't take me literally. I am not saying that we bang heads together to make Pakistanis of all our people. What I am trying to say is that sometimes political and other pressures become necessary to weld a nation together or to keep it together. This may be news for nations that are already mature or have forgotten similar phases in their history. We are not the only country in the world which has had to apply the pressures I spoke about. If the leadership in the Opposition had vision and foresight and if they had a full appreciation of all the problems involved, some of the actions and measures we had to take may have been unnecessary. However, the unity of this Islamic country has to be preserved, it must have precedence over everything else. We cannot make any compromise on this vital issue of the nation's integrity.

You know what has been happening in Bangladesh after its separation from us. Imagine what would happen to Pakistan, if God forbid, things here too fell apart. Our economy is integrated, most of our rivers flow through two or more of our provinces, our communications are interlinked, and, above all, we are followers of the same Faith.

Factors in national unity

There are some people who ask why we keep repeating that we follow the same faith of Islam when there are also Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and very many other countries and that therefore the bond of Islam is not enough. Some leaders have even emphasised publicly that they were Punjabis, Pathans, Sindhis or Baluchs before they were Muslims. But Islam is a great unifying factor and its role has varied in different places and times. And its achievements in different countries and regions have been influenced by historical, social and other factors. But its universal message of unity and brotherhood has been the same everywhere. The intensity and the range of its effect has been dependent on the existing social and related conditions in different countries. Its achievements have varied because of these factors. In Indonesia and Malaysia it played different roles. In South Asia,

in what is called the subcontinent, Islam was a catalyst that unified the Muslims of the subcontinent. So, you must take into account the effect of Islam in the socio-political conditions of each country, and the personalities of the torch-bearers of Islam. Here, ever since the advent of Islam it has had a cementing role. We should assess Islam's role in any country after taking into account all these factors.

Then, in national unity other factors also make important contributions — factors, of economic inter-dependence, communications, geography and those that I have already mentioned. All these, in our case, have combined to give our people a sense of unity, a sentiment of unity, which cuts across narrow provincial considerations.

Fate of parochialists

But to return to practical politics. If, God forbid, Baluchistan were separated from Pakistan, what would be the future of Baluchistan ? If Frontier became separate or was annexed to some other country, what would be the future of NWFP ? What would be the future of Sind, if it separated, and what would be the future of Punjab if it became separate or was merged with East Punjab ? It would be a terrible future. If these provinces were to separate, and not remain together as a united and strong entity of Pakistan, they would be no better than small municipalities. I tell you that they would be turned into municipalities of larger neighbours, they would suffer the fate of Sikkim — to give a recent example.

Provincial autonomy can be and is zealously exercised by all our provinces only because it is enshrined in the Constitution. It safeguards their legitimate rights. None of the languages of the four provinces and none of their cultures is suppressed. From the content of these languages and cultures — and these are neither just four in number, as our provinces are, nor do they exist only within the administrative boundaries of the provinces — a common unity has evolved. On this autonomy of each province, guaranteed by the Constitution ; on the primary of the Islamic bond ; and on the economic, geographic and other common factors mentioned earlier depends our future as a unified country. The future of the present generation and the future of all our generations to come, rests on the unity of Pakistan ; their dignity, their self-respect, their economic well-being are all anchored in the state of Pakistan.

And I repeat that the people of no province of Pakistan want to go from provincial autonomy within a free Pakistan, an independent Pakistan, a Muslim Pakistan, a progressive Pakistan, to the precarious position of municipality size states

at the mercy of larger neighbours. Because of this, our unity will grow and we will strengthen the country. Pakistan has a great future. When I say this, I do not mean a great future a hundred years or fifty years from now, I envisage turning the corner within this decade.

With what we are doing in the economic, social and other fields there should be a great change in less than a decade. In time, Inshallah, we hope that we will find oil in large quantities, that we will have more natural gas, that we will also be able to exploit more fully our natural resources. We will, of course, continue to mobilize all our present resources and increase production, and consolidate ourselves as a very happy and contended country.

Role of the Opposition

Question: *Sir, Pakistanis abroad are very much concerned about the role of the Opposition in Pakistan and the Opposition parties' activities abroad where they are busy damaging the image of Pakistan. How is your Government going to check these anti-Pakistan activities?*

Prime Minister : We are aware of these activities by the Opposition. I shall tell you what we have done. First, we have appealed to the Opposition to be responsible and not to go from one extreme to the other, not to go from the drawing room into the streets and start agitation. There are several political stages which come between the drawing room and agitation in the streets. In independent countries, politics are confined neither to drawing rooms nor are they taken to the streets for agitations. The stage in-between is the real road for constitutional opposition, for democratic opposition, for responsible opposition, and I hope that with time and maturity this process will be practised in Pakistan. Now, the Opposition here feeds on its own frustration, gets worked up and wants to topple the Government, a constitutional Government, by unconstitutional means. These Opposition parties want to defy the law which we have been elected to uphold and apply, which we cannot permit them to break. As a political party we can take them on in the streets if they want to take this destructive road, follow this negative and unconstitutional path but as a party charged with the responsibilities of Government we cannot join them to undermine laws meant for public peace and order.

As the Government we have to maintain law and order. We have done this in the last four years and we will continue to do it for the good of our people because the people's interest and their welfare is supreme.

Our compatriots and friends living abroad should not feel too disturbed. Some of these Opposition people who go to England or other countries live there for months and months, and they go to restaurants and make speeches — vulgar and abusive speeches. I know all about that, and of course I also know what their past political role has been. They are not people of importance. They don't bother about their constituencies. Some of them get elected on tickets of the majority party, then leave the majority party and go abroad and abuse it and abuse its leadership. If they cannot be faithful to the party and the leadership which gave them seats in parliament, they cannot be faithful to anyone. Several of these people are somewhat unbalanced. And, I use this expression quite consciously, and I know you understand the type of people I am referring to, the type that go to England and undermine the prestige of the country, saying that the country has no future. They make fools of themselves. I cannot stop them from doing that but I am concerned when this affects the image and the interests of Pakistan. The saving grace, perhaps, is that the people abroad — and I include our people — are well informed about Pakistan and the world. What do you think the audiences abroad say? They say that these people have no patriotism and are not fit to be responsible leaders even in Opposition. Nobody respects a person who is not loyal to his party or whose animosity to the Government takes precedence over national interests. We too do not give importance to such people. At the same time, we have respect for our people in Britain and other countries, we are aware of their concern for their motherland, we have confidence in their sense of fair play. We repose confidence in them because we know that most of them know what the Government in Pakistan has accomplished in the face of great odds. They have seen how we have overcome tremendous difficulties. And I am quite sure that they also know and appreciate the efforts of the Government here to promote their interests both in Pakistan and in the countries they live in, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Welfare measures for Pakistanis abroad

You know that we made it possible for our people in the United Kingdom to have dual citizenship. For their benefit we have made many concessions for the import of goods that they want to bring into Pakistan. Their welfare is and will always be uppermost in my mind. Of course, I have not been in England for quite sometime. I went there about two years ago when three hundred thousand Pakistanis were there. But since

then I have sent Ministers to Britain on a number of occasions. They have met members of the Pakistani community there. I see their reports and sometimes wish that I could myself visit them more often. But my obligations keep me very busy, even when I go abroad. My main purpose in going abroad is to have discussions with leaders of the countries I visit. This leaves me very little time to go to all the places where Pakistanis live. Still, I try to make the best use of the opportunity and the time available. I meet as many Pakistanis as possible, especially in England. I want to have more time for these meetings and for going from place to place, but my visits are short. I try to stay for a very short time because I do not like to strain the hospitality of the host country and stay longer than is necessary for the main purpose of the visit. I hope that my compatriots in Britain appreciate this difficulty but they can rest assured that their interests are very close to my heart. We know that our brothers and sisters living in Britain are making a big contribution to the economy of that country and also to the economy of their own country. I wish them well.

Foreign investment being encouraged

Question: *Sir, Pakistanis abroad would like to help in the development of this country. They would like to invest their savings here. Could some priorities be given to those who want to invest foreign exchange or could some office be set up to cut short formalities and red-tape?*

Prime Minister : I have tried to do that already. You know we have set up branches in England of the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan — everyone here knows it as IDBP — and we have given authority to the Embassy also to assist Pakistanis wanting to invest in their homeland. We have also taken some steps here to help in this. In principle, I can tell you that investment by Pakistanis in industry here would be welcome, and foreign investments and foreign capital coming into Pakistan will be safeguarded. I have already made it quite clear that foreign investments will not be nationalised, because we need them for greater capital formation and also because we are short of foreign exchange. Foreign investment does not mean capital coming from the British, French or Germans alone. The bulk of it is now expected from our Iranian brothers and from our Arab brothers who today have vast resources so there should be no objection to our brothers bringing foreign capital from Saudi Arabia, from the Arab countries and from Iran. No Pakistani will object to that and it is natural that we should fully safeguard their investments. We will continue to encourage and assist such investments. That is all I can say at the moment.

Self-sufficiency in food

Question: *Sir, international experts agree that all the prerequisites for achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrains exist in Pakistan, yet this has eluded us. Would you like to elucidate your Government's policy on what is being done in this regard?*

Prime Minister : Of course, it is true that we have the potential to be self-sufficient in foodgrains but we also have to take into account our increasing population. Our population is growing at a very rapid rate, almost at three per cent a year. That is a very big factor in achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrains. Then, our consumption is increasing more rapidly than it should. Our lands are being affected by waterlogging and salinity. We are fighting back to save our productive lands, and have made some progress but it is not enough. We are broadening and intensifying our measures against waterlogging and salinity to increase our agricultural production.

Then in the past, the prices of our foodgrains were not economic. In four years, we have increased prices, partly due to international price levels and partly to make it more attractive for people to grow foodgrains and turn to agriculture. In 1973 we had big floods which caused serious and widespread damage, and then in 1974 we had a drought, the worst drought in our history. Last year also we had floods in Punjab and Sind, and the cotton crop was badly damaged by them. On top of that, the Tarbela Dam did not come into operation. These factors set us back in our struggle for self-sufficiency. But we have fought our way back and are nearing the target of self-sufficiency in foodgrains. Our production of them is increasing and we are speeding it up to keep pace with growing consumption. We are determined to become self-sufficient in the production of foodgrains.

There are other reasons also that affect production. There is the question of social justice on the one hand, and on the other hand the question of growth. Growth and social justice must be blended together. Social justice means reforms ; reforms for labour, reforms for the peasantry. When reforms take place there is an initial period of some uncertainty ; investors feel nervous and capital is shy. Some people say that this uncertainty should be ended. Some say restore the old status quo, little realising that that will bring about an upheaval which will have a far worse effect on production than uncertainty. We are going through a transition and in the next year or so we shall have settled down in a new mould. By that time most of our major reforms will have produced the benefits envisaged in our first manifesto. As transition periods end in different sectors, and confidence returns with stability, the rate of investment goes up. That has been the general pattern.

New international economic order

Question: *Sir, the continuing adverse terms of trade of the underdeveloped countries and the oil crisis, it seems, have affected the economic development in Pakistan. How is your Government handling this and at the same time keeping the inflationary pressure to a minimum?*

Prime Minister : Nobody can deny that there is a big gap in our balance of payments but there is a very big gap in the balance of payments of most countries. There is a very big gap in the balance of payments of Britain. You know that. I keep referring to Britain because you live there and because this interview will be read by our Pakistani friends who also live in Britain. If some countries' terms of trade improve abnormally then naturally other countries' terms of trade will be affected adversely. A plus for some countries means that there will be a minus for some other countries. It is simple mathematics.

In the past, the industrially developed countries of the world had all the pluses. The Third World had all the minuses. Now some of the Third World oil producing countries have great surpluses. These surpluses don't fall from the heavens. These surpluses come from the rise in the prices of the commodities which are exported by them. So, if the prices of their commodities which are exported to other countries rise very much, then obviously the bill has to be paid by those countries which import those commodities, which means that their balance of payments will be affected adversely. That is why it is essential to have a new international economic order which will have a rational basis for the economic development of countries and also make the terms of trade more equitable.

This can come by various means. There can be special funds created for this purpose, there can be stabilization of the prices of primary commodities, there can be a linking of primary commodities with manufactured goods. If the developed countries, the oil-producing countries and the underdeveloped countries genuinely want to bring about a more rational international monetary system, it can be done and it should be done. Otherwise the outcome would be disastrous for all. We shall be affected and so will other countries ; such phenomena do not stop at national frontiers in the world of today. Therefore, I hope that the Paris Conference which was convened recently, will not be confined to the setting up of committees only but that these committees and commissions will produce some results, and that members of these various committees will not only look after the interests of their own countries or groups of countries but approach their task in a world-wide perspective. If they look at the world-wide pic-

ture and address themselves seriously to the task of redressing the anomalies in the international monetary system, I believe that a satisfactory answer will be found for the good of all.

Bangladesh

Question: *Sir, Bangladesh seems to have come a full circle. How do you see the development in Bangladesh affecting India and Pakistan?*

Prime Minister : Bangladesh has, indeed, come almost a full circle. It is but natural that Pakistan be interested in the welfare of Bangladesh because we were one nation. Why should anyone think it unusual and extraordinary for us to be interested in Bangladesh ? But if some countries do not want us to show a natural and normal interest in Bangladesh, they are being unrealistic. They should not be suspicious, they should not be worried about our intentions. Perhaps, if some of these countries were not responsible for the dismemberment of Pakistan, and if the people of East Pakistan themselves wanted separation, then there would be no cause for these countries to be nervous, because they could maintain that the Bengalis of Pakistan wanted separation and that no one forced separation on them. But if separation was forced on them, then those who separated the two parts of Pakistan, may have cause to be nervous. So, there is no reason for any country to be sensitive about our relations with Bangladesh unless it is bothered by something it has done in the past or has plans of doing something in the future.

The other day, in my broadcast to the nation on the 20th of December, I said that we owe an explanation to nobody for our relations with Bangladesh. We want good and normal relations with Bangladesh. We do not want anything more than what the people of Bangladesh want. What they want we shall be willing to consider very sympathetically. After all, we have a moral obligation and they have a moral obligation, and I do not see why any nation should get disturbed if its record is clean and if it had no hand in what came to surface in 1971. The more uneasy or agitated any country becomes at the normalisation of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the greater will be the suspicion that in its attitude there is something more than meets the eye. I do not see why India should in any way be worried or disturbed if we improve our relations with Bangladesh or if we have very good relations with Bangladesh.

Relations with neighbouring countries

Question: *Sir, finally what is your visualisation of development of relations between Pakistan and its neighbours during the next quarter of a century?*

Prime Minister: That is a tall order! In this fast moving world it is not easy to foresee what relationships will develop in the next quarter of a century between Pakistan and all its neighbours. I can, however, venture to say something about Pakistan but the relationships you have asked about will depend also on the attitude of our neighbouring countries. This, of course, will be determined by the political leaderships that Pakistan and its neighbours will have during the next 25 years which is the span of a generation. Generally, I can say that if our neighbours want to live in friendship and amity, I do not see why the people of Pakistan would not want to live in friendship and amity with them; provided, of course, that the differences and disputes are resolved satisfactorily and according to principles. The outstanding disputes must be resolved according to principles and to the satisfaction of the people involved in the disputes. If that happens, if these neighbouring countries can resolve their differences and disputes sensibly, in a civilised fashion and to the satisfaction of the people concerned, then there should be a happy and a good future for everyone. Why should there not be greater co-operation among these neighbouring countries?

There is co-operation today not only within regions but between regions. Why should there not be co-operation in South Asia as well? We do not want to have conflicts and wars, and we do not want to see bloodshed and destruction. We have had enough of it: three wars are more than enough and no problem has been solved yet by war either for us or for other people. We do not, therefore, pursue a policy of aggression. We do not pursue a policy of war. We pursue a policy of peace but peace with freedom, peace with liberty, peace with self-respect, and if other nations understand that and want to live in the same atmosphere and abide by the same rules, I do not see why there cannot be a greater degree of co-operation and understanding between Pakistan and its neighbouring countries — now and in the years ahead and, since you asked, in the next quarter of a century.

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